



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**2 December 2007**

### **Conservationists outraged by lack of protection in draft Moreton Bay plan**

The Queensland Government today released its draft 2008 Zoning Plan for Moreton Bay Marine Park. The draft Plan proposes to protect just 15 per cent of Moreton Bay's 16 aquatic habitats in green zones (marine national parks).

The Australian Marine Conservation Society today expressed outrage that the Queensland Government is proposing to protect less than half of what Moreton Bay needs. The Society is calling on the Queensland Government to significantly upgrade the Plan before finalisation.

Craig Bohm, National Campaigns Director with the Society said "Given the importance of Moreton Bay to turtles, dugongs, migratory shorebirds and other wildlife, it is outrageous that so little protection is on offer. We are calling on the Queensland Government to protect an average of 30 per cent of Moreton Bay's habitats in green zones to secure the future of these precious animals."

Bohm said, "Growing scientific consensus (reported by the Queensland Government's Independent Assessment Panel) calls for an average of 30 per cent 'green zone' protection to secure the health and productivity of places like Moreton Bay. The Government's draft Plan represents just half the protection that scientific consensus recommends."

Bohm said, "Moreton Bay needs the same level of protection as other Australian icon areas such as the Great Barrier Reef and Ningaloo Reef where more than 33 per cent was protected in green zones. Moreton Bay is suffering from significantly more pressure than those areas and is as equally precious and important."

Bohm said, "The pressures on Moreton Bay Marine Park are significant. Some 50,000 people move to south-east Queensland each year, many of whom want to access Moreton Bay. There is growing concern amongst Queenslanders about the threat of overfishing, impacts of climate change on the Park's coral reefs and the loss of some 200 turtles and 15 dugongs each year due to human impacts."

"The Australian Marine Conservation Society is calling on the Premier, Anna Bligh, to protect the following additional areas of Moreton Bay Marine Park in green zones (marine national parks):

1. The eastern banks (from Crab Island in the north to Peel Island in the south) representing the most important seagrass meadows for turtles and dugongs;
2. Peel Island – south western side, where extensive coral communities have been ignored in the draft;
3. Waterloo Bay, on the western shores of Moreton Bay near Manly, which is the healthiest of the Park's western embayments according to the latest Healthy Waterways Partnership report card. Extensive seagrass meadows, coral communities and shorebird habitats are found there; and
4. Expanding protection of offshore reefs such as at Flinders Reef (north of Moreton Island) and Manta Ray bombies (off North Stradbroke Island) where heavy fishing pressure are taking their toll.

These are all exceptionally important habitats, and are examples of areas which are too precious to leave open to continued pressure from extractive uses."

"The Australian Marine Conservation Society looks forward to working with the Queensland Government to upgrade the draft Zoning Plan to a level which will secure the health of Moreton Bay into the future," Bohm concluded.

Ends

---

#### ABOUT AMCS

The national Australian Marine Conservation Society is based in Manly, Brisbane. The AMCS is Australia's peak marine conservation group and has operated nationally since 1965. It monitors and rescues marine species and marine environments. The AMCS has launched a pilot project to save turtles from unnecessary death by crab pots and other marine debris. The project involves locals working with scientists and industry.

**Websites:** [www.marineconservation.org.au](http://www.marineconservation.org.au) [www.savemoretonbay.org.au](http://www.savemoretonbay.org.au)

**Photos:** Contact AMCS head office on (07) 3393 5811

**Media contact:** Craig Bohm: 0427 133 481

#### **About Green Zones**

Green Zones protect habitats and the marine life that call them home. Like national parks on the land, marine parks need green zones where marine creatures can freely live and breed. The public has full access to green zones, however extractive activities such as fishing and mining are not allowed.